United Nations S/2002/192

Security Council

Distr.: General
25 February 2002
English
Original: French

Letter dated 25 February 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Morocco to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Following the issuance of the report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council dated 19 February 2002 (S/2002/178), I have the honour to transmit the following observations on behalf of my Government:

First of all, it should be noted that, as the report indicates in its paragraph 2, it was during the visit of President Bouteflika to Houston, Texas, on 2 November 2001 that the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General, Mr. James Baker III, reached the conclusion that Algeria and the Frente POLISARIO not only rejected the framework agreement, but that they "would be prepared to discuss or negotiate a division of the Territory as a political solution to the dispute over Western Sahara".

This latter suggestion, which was put to the Personal Envoy, was immediately rejected by the Kingdom of Morocco when it was informed of it. The Moroccan Government reaffirms its categorical rejection of any proposal which would undermine the territorial integrity of the Kingdom and its sovereignty over its southern provinces. It wishes to formally declare its complete opposition to any discussion of any partition whatsoever of its provinces.

If the Secretary-General, out of concern for exhaustiveness, refers to this proposal as a third option submitted for the consideration of the Security Council, the Moroccan Government nonetheless wishes to point out that it is clearly contrary to all the fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations and, in particular, the self-determination which Algeria has claimed to support in order to justify its interest in this dispute.

There can be no doubt, moreover, that this option contains the seeds of instability and tension for the entire region. Accordingly, the United Nations cannot give its backing to a political manoeuvre designed to deal with territories and populations in a completely arbitrary way.

The Kingdom of Morocco reiterates its commitment to negotiate a just and lasting solution on the basis of the framework agreement (second option) proposed by Mr. Baker and endorsed by the Security Council in its resolution 1359 (2001) of 29 June 2001.

As to the settlement plan, the Kingdom of Morocco takes note of the Secretary-General's assessment of that first option, which "would in the years ahead face most of the problems and obstacles that it has faced during the past 10 years",

02-26221 (E) 250202 250202

and leaves it to the Security Council to draw such consequences as it deems appropriate.

No one, of course, can be unaware that the fourth option is linked to the observance of the ceasefire and the preservation of peace, for which the Security Council bears the primary responsibility.

Lastly, the Moroccan Government takes this opportunity to recall the need for the Council to clearly delink humanitarian issues from the political settlement and to demand that those who are still holding 1,362 Moroccans in Algerian territory for over 20 years release them immediately, as the Secretary-General asks in paragraph 17 of the report.

I should be grateful if you would circulate this letter to the members of the Security Council and issue it as a document of the Council.

(*Signed*) Mohamed **Bennouna**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Morocco
to the United Nations